

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 035166

STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IR

SUBJECT: CBS INTERVIEW WITH SHAH

REF: STATE 34271

FOR AMBASSADOR

1. ZAHEDI FILLED US IN ON HIS FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION WITH WALLACE (REFTEL) IN WHICH BY HIS ACCOUNT HE PLAYED IT COOL EMPHASIZING HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND THE ROLE IT PLAYS IN OUR DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. HE TOLD WALLACE HE HAD NO INTEREST OR DESIRE IN SUPPRESSING LEGITIMATE NEWS BUT FELT AN OBLIGATION TO ACQUAINT HIM WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT WALLACE'S INTERVIEW WITH THE SHAH MIGHT BE MISUNDERSTOOD WITH ADVERSE EFFECTS ON U.S.-IRAN RELATIONS AND IRAN-SAUDI RELATIONS. ZAHEDI SAID THAT INITIALLY WALLACE WAS UP-TIGHT AND HARDNOSED BUT AS THE CONVERSATION PROGRESSED EVIDENCED SOME GIVE AND UNDERSTANDING. THE CONVERSATION

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CONCLUDED FROM ZAHEDI'S POINT OF VIEW ON THE FAINTLY

OPTIMISTIC NOTE THAT SOME OF THE SHAH'S MORE INTEMPERATE
REMARKS ON OIL PRICES, FAISAL, ETC. MAY BE EXCISED FROM
THE FINAL BROADCAST PRODUCT.

2. ZAHEDI SAID THAT HE HAD REPORTED HIS CONVERSATION
WITH WALLACE TO THE SHAH AND INTER ALIA HAD GIVEN US

FULL MARKS FOR OUR SUPPORTIVE ROLE IN THIS MATTER.
FULL MARKS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN MUCH HOWEVER AS HE SAID
THAT HE POINTED OUT TO THE SHAH THERE WAS NOT A GREAT
DEAL OF EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE WE COULD BRING TO BEAR ON
THE MEDIA IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS. RUSH

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